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This assessment of the current state of preparation of teachers of composition points out deficiencies in programs and suggests ways to improve them. It defines composition as both oral and written discourse; describes the actual job of teaching composition; defends John Dixon's thesis that experience should be the focus for teaching composition; briefly reviews typical preservice programs for teachers of composition; critiques freshman and advanced composition courses, speech courses, and English methods courses; discusses the possible influence of the English profession as it is exemplified in the "Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English--1968"; and presents an exemplary program of preparation for the teaching of composition, with the suggestion that four competencies be developed--literacy (or performance with language), pedagogy, knowledge of rhetoric and linguistics, and knowledge of psychology and philosophy of language. (JB)

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TEACHER PREPARATION IN COMPOSITION

Eugene H. Smith

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Taurus, the second sign of the Zodiac, known as the bull, represents intellectual as well as financial power. It is said that those born under this sign have great facility in expressing their ideas through all mediums of communication.

NCTE/ERIC Studies in the Teaching of English

TEACHER PREPARATION IN COMPOSITION

Knowledge is of two kinds: we know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it.

– Samuel Johnson

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TEACHER PREPARATION IN COMPOSITION

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FOREWORD TO THE SERIES

The Bureau of Research of the United States Office of Education has in recent years considerably expanded its support to basic and applied research in education. It has also made possible and encouraged the dissemination of findings and conclusions. As the body of information derived from research has expanded, however, so has the gap between research and classroom teaching. Recognizing this problem, the Bureau of Research has charged ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) to go beyond its initial function of gathering, evaluating, indexing, and disseminating information to a significant new service: information analysis and synthesis.

The ERIC system has already made available – through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service – much informative data, including all Bureau of Research reports since 1956. However, if the findings of specific educational research are to be intelligible to teachers and applicable to teaching, considerable bodies of data must be reevaluated, focused, translated, and molded into an essentially different context. Rather than resting at the point of making research reports readily accessible, the Bureau of Research has now directed the separate ERIC Clearinghouses to commission from recognized authorities state-of-the-art papers in specific areas.

Each state-of-the-art paper focuses on a concrete educational need. The paper attempts a comprehensive treatment and qualitative assessment of the published and unpublished material on the topic. The author reviews relevant research, curriculum trends, teaching materials, the judgments of recognized experts in the field, reports and findings from various national committees and commissions. In his analysis he tries to answer the question "Where are we?" sometimes finds order in apparently disparate approaches, often points in new directions. The knowledge contained in a state-of-the-art paper is a necessary foundation for reviewing existing curricula and planning new beginnings.

NCTE/ERIC, with direction and major substantive assistance from its Advisory Committee, has identified a number of timely and important problem areas in the teaching of English and has commissioned state-of-the-art papers from knowledgeable members of the profession. It is hoped that this series of papers, each subject to review by the National Council of Teachers of English Committee on Publications, will provide a place to stand. The next step is the lever.

Bernard O'Donnell
Director, NCTE/ERIC

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TEACHER PREPARATION IN COMPOSITION

One of the hoariest statements that one hears from cynical college English teachers is "You can't teach people to write!" The motives that lead to such a conclusion range from exasperation with inept freshmen to genuine conviction that a good writer must inevitably discover for himself what to say and how to say it. Undoubtedly, too, a teacher who makes this statement has perceived the extreme difficulty of teaching people to write. In spite of the many handbooks which reduce composition to formulaic rules and easily stated bits of advice, the actual translation of thought to linear form seems to transcend these fragile aids.

One less often hears "You can't teach people to speak." Yet there is no less evidence to be collected from observation that learning to express thought orally is difficult.

So a discussion of preparation of teachers of composition must start with answers – which may simply be premises based upon hope and a strong sense of need – to the interrogative form of these two statements.

Can people be taught to write? Can people be taught to speak?

The whole American educational system, from nursery school to graduate school, seems to be based upon the assumption that any desired learning can occur in school. Whether they be facts, concepts, thought processes, attitudes, or values that somehow belong in a democracy, they can be made available for learning in a school. Teachers, it is assumed, can do something to make the learning occur. Literacy, of course, has always been one of the major aims of the American educational system – literacy in its more limiting definition, at any rate: the ability to read and write. By most available standards, it appears that schools

are producing people who can read and write (and speak?) at least at this minimum level of literacy. But now we assume that the minimum level of literacy is not enough. A literate culture should be made up of "educated" people, those who are well informed and able to perform more complicated intellectual maneuvers. And since language is the medium for this kind of literacy too, we assume that schools can teach people to speak and write at this higher level of literacy.

What evidence do we have that the assumption is justified? At the popular level, complaints continue from employers of high school graduates. The basic language skills, especially the most easily evaluated signs of conformity to language conventions (spelling, handwriting, punctuation, usage), are weak, they say. Industries that employ technicians complain that communications barriers are among their chief difficulties: reports are not comprehensibly written, and oral explanations are fogged with ambiguity and imprecision. In colleges and universities, professors lament their students' lack of clarity, organization, and pertinence in their examinations and term papers.

When casual observation has been supplanted by attempts at more precise and systematic measurement of expressive language ability, the cause for complaint diminishes somewhat. Some school systems report increases during the past few years in performance levels for certain writing skills, and many colleges have reduced their offerings in remedial composition. These measurements are suspect, however, both because they usually omit the more complicated and significant thought processes and because they do not establish the fact that improvement resulted from anything that was learned in school.

One is left with the conclusion that the fundamental assumption about the efficacy of schooling for learning to compose in language is only an assumption, not a proven fact. It is very difficult to prove that school instruction improves ability to speak and write. It has been seemingly impossible to prove that any particular instructional technique has more value than any other in affecting students' expressive ability.[1] But the social

[1] Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer, *Research in Written Composition* (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963).

needs for higher levels of skill with language are so great that they make necessary the assumption that teachers can help students improve their composition skills. Maybe people could learn to speak and write well without schools and without the intervention of anyone labelled "teacher." Maybe schools have actually retarded people's development in using language by artificially and prematurely limiting the scope and variety of communication possibilities. These assumptions seem just as valid and likely as the assumption that schools can affect development positively.

Honesty demands the recognition that the root assumption is shaky. Faith and optimism prod us to acceptance of this assumption and to the answer, "Yes, people can be taught to write and speak. They can be taught in schools, and, if present methods of teaching do not seem to be producing good enough results, we must continue to look for better methods."

The cynicism of college English teachers who say, "You can't teach people to write!" may account for the quality of teacher preparation programs in composition. With very few exceptions, have college programs ever been more than "grievously deficient"[2] in grammar, usage, and composition? A course or two in freshman composition has commonly been the mainstay of prospective teachers' preparation to teach composition. The assumption seems to have been, If he can demonstrate college-level proficiency in writing as demanded in the language service course (freshman composition), the prospective teacher is capable of teaching students to speak and write. Administratively, this has been a handy criterion, though its grotesque inadequacy has been evident at least to professional English teachers' organizations who have regularly deplored it.

The notion that passing prescribed courses is sufficient guarantee of competence to teach has prevailed for many years. This means that even in programs that have demanded more than freshman composition as preparation to teach English there has seldom been assurance that course content increases competence to teach. Furthermore, teacher preparation programs have notoriously had only tenuous connections with the actual job of

[2]Committee on National Interest, *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1961), p. 74.

teaching young people in a classroom. Where such connections have existed, they have probably been much stronger and clearer in transmission-of-knowledge subjects than in skill-performance subjects such as spoken and written composition.

It is difficult to be charitable in speaking of preparation programs for teachers of composition in either their quantitative or their qualitative dimensions. Yet charity is called for because the problem is difficult and the solutions not at all certain. The material for solutions is both ancient and modern; it is bracketed by a 2,000-year-old rhetorical tradition which is still relevant and by very recent exploration in philosophy, psychology, and linguistics. Teaching composition and hence the preparation of teachers of composition could be considerably altered, if not improved, by more thorough application of knowledge from these varied sources than has been widely attempted heretofore. An assessment of the current state of the art of preparing teachers of composition must therefore dwell upon many of the acknowledged deficiencies and at least suggest new sources of strength.

A NON-FRAGMENTING DEFINITION OF COMPOSITION

There are some important denotative and connotative definition problems with current use of the word "composition." While most teachers would unhesitatingly agree that the word refers to the putting together of words in some appropriate form to achieve a whole unit of discourse, they probably also first think of words in written form. The hurly-burly manner of much oral discourse does not usually suggest composition; in fact, with children it often seems anything but composed (either logically or tonally). But of course most of their oral discourse is composed – if it succeeds at all – as communication. Connotatively, though, only the prepared speech or the labored-over essay seems to merit the term "composition" in teachers' vocabularies. A first corrective must be the defining of composition to include both oral and written discourse (with varying degrees of precision and formality according to the purpose and the occasion). The principles of teaching composition, therefore, must be seen as applying to both oral and written forms, a vision which suits student users of language as well as their teachers.

A second problem is very closely tied to courses of study and textbooks devised for composition. It might be called the analytic versus the synthetic definition of composition and composition teaching. Since a composition is irrevocably made up of parts, there must be some way not only of dealing with but also of talking about the part-whole relationships. The easiest and perhaps the most "logical" way is to be analytic – to start with the finished composition, oral or written, to examine its components, to give terms to them, and to explain how and why they were assembled so. The consequence of this process, so far as teaching and teaching materials are concerned, is to formulate rules and categories which the student is expected to learn so that he will then be able to produce a finished composition, oral or written, which conforms in some measure to the abstract model. Without forcing a judgment about the possible efficacy of such an approach to composing, one may simply observe that it leads to smaller and smaller bits and proceeds in the opposite direction from the actual process of composing.

The composing process is synthetic. It draws in mysterious, often only partially predictable, ways upon whatever resources of ideas, facts, experiences the composer has. If he uses rules or abstractions about the act of composing itself, he does it in eclectic and unverifiable fashion. The more vivid his memory of certain admonitions about how to compose, the more restricting and paralyzing may be the effects upon his thought.

A usable definition of composition as the basis for teacher preparation programs, then, must bring the pieces and the forms of composition together. The prospective teacher should see the essential unity of composition. This is such a high-level generalization, however, that it can easily be accepted as a truism without comprehension of its pervasiveness or complexity. Perhaps this requirement raises one of the most pertinent and persistent questions: How can teacher preparation programs in composition (indeed, in all of English) which consist of discrete courses assure that prospective teachers adequately understand whole-part relationships in discourse?

TYPICAL CURRENT PREPARATION PROGRAMS

The most striking evidence of current dissatisfaction with preservice preparation programs for teaching composition occurs in the report of a survey made in 1963 by the National Council of Teachers of English. *The National Interest and the Continuing Education of Teachers of English* reports of the secondary English teacher sample:

> To the extent that their own evaluation of preparation may be accepted as an adequate index of need, the data point to the overwhelming concern of such teachers with their lack of competence in teaching *oral skills* and reading, suggest that two-thirds of the secondary teachers do not feel confident of their *preparation in composition,* and reveal that almost half are insecure in literature and in language as well.[3]

Preservice preparation is surely not the only way of acquiring competence in the teaching of oral and written composition, but it is equally surely one of the most important steps toward that competence. With the recognition that variations in preservice composition preparation are almost as numerous as the colleges that offer them, to establish a "typical" preparation program may have some value as a reference point. Typical here will be roughly equivalent to what is considered a "good" program, using the status quo as a standard rather than a projected ideal program. The prospective secondary teacher of English and all elementary teachers would take the following courses:

1. freshman composition (a notoriously amorphous and undefined course which might range from a review of mechanical fundamentals to an introduction to literature)
2. one or two courses in "advanced composition" (usually expository but sometimes including prose fiction, verse, or drama)
3. one or two speech courses ("basic" speech, or speech fundamentals, and oral interpretation of literature)

[3]Committee on National Interest, *The National Interest and the Continuing Education of Teachers of English* (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1964), p. 26; italics added.

4. an English teaching methods course or a course in the teaching of the language arts (which often relegates oral and written composition to second- or third-order position after reading and literature).

The fact that most elementary and secondary English teachers do not take such a program must be made clear. Another report of surveys made in 1960 and 1961 by the National Council of Teachers of English contains evidence about these course offerings:

for elementary teachers

99.6% were required to complete freshman composition
19.7% were required to complete a course in composition beyond the freshman level
11.2% were required to complete a course in oral interpretation of literature
71.9% were required to complete a course in speech other than oral interpretation
68.7% were required to complete courses in methods of teaching and content of reading and the language arts *for a maximum of 5 semester hours*[4]

for secondary teachers

41% of students who planned to teach (as opposed to "regular English majors") were required to complete at least one course in advanced composition
75% of the colleges surveyed offered an English methods course
51.5% of the English majors were required to complete the English methods course
20.8% of the English minors were required to complete the English methods course
62.5% of the students in English methods courses were exposed to study of methods of teaching written composition[5]

No comparable survey is available for prospective college teachers of English, many of whom will be deeply involved in the teaching of written composition. However, many statements of leaders in college English confirm the inadequacy of preparation for that job. Roger P. McCutcheon, professor of English at

[4] *The National Interest and the Teaching of English*, pp. 55-57.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 70-73.

Vanderbilt University and emeritus dean of the graduate school of Tulane University, stated in 1965:

> Since 90 percent of the Ph D's in English go into college teaching, should not graduate study also include direct preparation for the college classroom? . . . Since most of the new Ph D's will be teaching freshmen for several years, we should provide them with a course in rhetoric. I have noted an almost complete lack of such courses. To be sure, there are plenty of courses in creative writing, but these will not serve the purpose. We are neglecting the proved value of rhetoric as a teaching tool and to our detriment. Also, as a reasonable protection to undergraduates, each graduate student headed for teaching should satisfy the speech department that his speech is adequate or can be made adequate with special exercises.[6]

The "typical" program of preparation in composition does exist at many colleges and universities, in some instances probably because of the two NCTE survey reports. Even if it were widely prevalent, however, there would be little reason for assurance that it adequately prepares teachers to teach oral and written composition. Competence is still largely measured by successful completion of the courses; the courses are commonly very loosely described and highly variable in content; there are very few checks on the standards of performance within sections of these courses or at the end of the sequence of courses. A good deal of this looseness and unspecificity is good insofar as it allows a capable instructor to be imaginative and to stimulate his students' expression in original ways. On the other hand, blind reliance on grades received in supposedly pertinent courses easily becomes a dubious criterion. A careful analysis of the courses currently offered for preparation in composition is a necessary prologue to proposals for change.

[6]Roger P. McCutcheon, "Graduate Programs in English," in *The College Teaching of English* (Vol. IV of NCTE Curriculum Series), John C. Gerber, ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), p. 251.

CRITIQUE OF CURRENT PREPARATION PROGRAMS

The disdain shown by many college English department faculty for preparation of teachers is widespread and distressing. Among other "cleavages" in the profession of college English teaching, John Fisher noted the cleavage "between the study of English for its own sake and the preparation of others to teach it. This cleavage is related to, but not identical with, that between English as a skill and English as a body of knowledge."[7] The elementary teacher and the graduate professor of English stand in inverse relationship to each other with respect to the importance of knowledge of child development and method versus knowledge of the subject.

> But in the humanities – in English, especially – we have a shameful record of failure to understand, or even to try to understand each other at the two ends of the spectrum. Instead of finding sympathy and help, the elementary school teacher, and too often even the high school teacher, is barred from taking graduate courses in English. And if by chance he gets in, he finds little that is relevant to his problems. . . . The gravest and most dangerous self-deception that we in college English have been guilty of is in regarding "research" as our true vocation and sloughing off teaching and the preparing of teachers as necessary evils.[8]

Fisher's judgment is that prospective teachers must be moved to the center of attention of all college English professors, with the result both of helping prospective teachers "read and write with fluency and perception" and of assisting them to transmute college approaches to reading and writing for younger students.[9] This reorientation is still a novel idea and one that may have to percolate through some English departments for several years before it gains acceptance.

At least nominal acceptance of the idea was given, before Fisher's statement was published, at a seminar of English department chairmen. Meeting in December 1962, this group of approximately eighty prominent chairmen issued resolutions which:

[7]John H. Fisher, "Prospect," in *The College Teaching of English*, p. 7.
[8]*Ibid.*, p. 8.
[9]*Ibid.*, p. 10.

1. affirm that "preparation of teachers of English and their continuing education as teachers" are among the important and unshirkable responsibilities of college and university English departments
2. recommend establishment of suitable courses and post-baccalaureate programs for English teachers
3. encourage special programs such as institutes, courses, and demonstrations in English language, composition, and literature for elementary and secondary school teachers in service.[10]

Since there had never before been a meeting of college English department chairmen on this subject, the implication is that deficiencies needed remedy. The conference was an admission of egregious error in past practice and attitude.

Freshman composition

Since freshman composition is the only course that is common to nearly all prospective teachers of composition, a close look at its status is necessary. Robert Gorrell calls it "an institution in American college education,"[11] and, like most institutions, it is a ready target for attack and often needs defense. Perhaps the great faith that is placed in it accounts for the extravagant statements of purpose, statements which embody

> the hope that it will work not one but a series of major miracles: that it will change the language habits of many students so that they will become adept in the dialect of standard English, that it will produce students who have ideas, can find facts to develop them, and can organize and present material clearly and persuasively, that it will train students to read expository prose rapidly and accurately and also to appreciate and interpret literature, that it will make students think clearly and logically, and so on.[12]

Against this list of ambitious aims can be placed a catalog of imperfections and incongruities:

[10] "Departmental Memo: Resolutions Adopted at a Seminar of English Department Chairmen," *College English*, 24 (March 1963), 473-475.
[11] Robert Gorrell, "Freshman Composition," in *The College Teaching of English*, p. 91.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

1. The course is "far from standard in content" – not necessarily a weakness but an acknowledgement that almost anything can happen in the course, including many things irrelevant to increased competence with language.
2. The instructor often feels pressure to cover so much material that he finds himself unable to do anything thoroughly, with the student often feeling that he is simply reviewing quickly what he has already done in high school English classes.
3. There are few if any pieces of evidence (for example, in the form of specimens of discourse) that students who complete the course have attained any of the finely stated purposes.
4. The teachers of the courses themselves complain about them and seldom exhibit enthusiasm about the prospect of teaching freshman composition; it is commonly regarded as penance or a place to mark time while waiting for a more rewarding (in both money and prestige) teaching assignment.

It is tempting to think that the large amount of money and effort poured into books (freshman composition is the largest college textbook market), salaries (graduate students and "regular" English faculty), and time for planning, discussing, and reading papers must do good. According to Gorrell, the amazing thing is that the course has so often been successful, though the measure of this success is usually limited to the sporadic retrospective comments of students. Again, it seems that most of the support for an assumption of value in teaching composition comes from a need to believe the assumption.

Gorrell makes several suggestions to improve freshman composition if it is to continue as a required service course for college students. Each of these suggestions seems relevant to prospective teachers of composition, if only because the proposed changes might produce a keener perception of the writing process.

1. The content and standards of freshman composition should be more difficult than for high school English.
2. The course should have a focus on some organized subject matter instead of attempting a broad coverage of many loosely related topics.
3. Students should sense some progression as they practice writing – not any supposed inherent or natural order of

composition, but a perceptible and reasoned sequence of assignments, exercises, or concepts.

4. Course planners need to consider a course clearly focused on the art of writing itself, with intensive restudy of the relevance of grammar, logic, semantics, and rhetoric to composition. This would be quite a different kind of course from one that focused on literature or language, both of which are active alternatives and presently in use. (A significant supporting statement from Gorrell: "It seems to me that a major need of English departments is more study of the art of composition; investigation of rhetorical problems seems to me of more real importance than many of the research projects in methods of teaching English."[13])

5. Graduate study for teachers of freshman composition should include more work in language and rhetoric than is now available in M.A. and Ph.D. programs.[14]

Advanced composition

The next course in the "typical" sequence that deals with composition explicitly (i.e., other than courses which merely require term papers or other compositions as a means of fulfilling requirements) is advanced composition, nearly always a synonym for expository writing. Richard Lloyd-Jones, in reviewing the scope and flavor of this course – and in acknowledging the difficulty of getting reliable information about the course (the instructor "reports only to himself or God") – concludes that humanity is central.

> Indeed, all of the advanced courses in composition, even technical and business writing, ought to be basically humane and social. The value of good writing in a vocation may persuade some faculties to require them, some students to take them, and some executives to campaign for them, but any teacher who restricts himself to narrowly vocational materials teaches a trivial course – and one of questionable vocational value. The forms of reports and the fashions of punctuation change fairly rapidly, and any student who is permitted to think that in memorizing forms he has learned to write is encouraged in the most horrifying nonsense. Yet, the student's own commitment to

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 110-114.

> some form of professional knowledge is just what gives force and substance to the advanced composition course. When the student is committed to knowing, then he can be bound to language; when the student desires to place his knowledge before the world, he will listen to the English teacher. The English teacher can afford to take a lectern of the student's choice.[15]

Becoming "bound to language" is perhaps the key phrase here for organization and teaching of the course. It means that the student should achieve a more sophisticated and compelling awareness of language and his own experience than he has known before. The course should somehow take him below the surface of written language and show him some of the ways in which the bond to language is accomplished. There may be as many ways of doing this in an advanced composition course as there are competent instructors. Among these, however, Lloyd-Jones has mentioned five emphases or orientations, none of which is "pure" or excludes the others.

A "rational approach" might emphasize logical precision in recording the forms of truth from the objective world in the symbols of language. It would elevate straightforward sense and clarity as aims for writing in the course and presumably would thereby require the English major to discipline his thought rigorously. "Even the English major ought to know how the world expresses its daily business; the English major may teach others how to write and should know what they need to know."[16]

The advanced course may have a strong literary bias, using works with literary excellence for examination of composition technique. The best essays from previous centuries can provide abundant material for intellectual nourishment and emulation.

A more limited version of the historical foray is a course which focuses on a history of English prose style. By determinedly removing himself from the fashions and limitations of twentieth century prose, the student may be able to enlarge his repertoire of expressive techniques and so use language more flexibly and gracefully.

[15]Richard Lloyd-Jones, "Advanced Composition," in *The College Teaching of English*, p. 130.

[16]*Ibid.*, p. 119.

Rhetoricians, ancient and modern, provide another fund of material for study. Plato, Aristotle, Read, and Burke – the student may derive from such thinkers a depth of understanding about language that affects his writing well below the superficial level.

Another splendid possibility is organization around the notion of voice. Any writer must adopt a stance in relation to his subject matter and an audience; in this stance he identifies himself by a voice whose tonal qualities have much to do with his persuasiveness. The decisions required because of the use of this voice are numerous and subtle. "The study of voice . . . is aimed at revealing what is unique in man, or at least in examining his Pirandellan mask, and in inferring from a study of rhetorical forms how one identifies his own voice."[17]

The good advanced composition course, then, presupposes a serious-minded adult who has already attained reasonable competence in writing and who wishes to extend his resources as a mature writer.

Other composition courses

Although some colleges and universities offer a second course in advanced expository writing, an alternative at many institutions is one or more courses in other literary forms: verse, prose fiction, or drama. Such courses are sometimes labelled "creative writing," although that term is unfortunate because it implies that expository writing is uncreative. That implication is insupportable.

Because the importance of a gift for writing is thought to be greater in the non-expository forms, courses devoted to the teaching of them have been questioned. It is not certain what a teacher can do in such a class. One of the most pertinent answers, though, is to suggest that a "creative writing course" is, in fact, a "creative reading course." The essence has been stated by John Husband:

> It's a looking behind the scenes, seeing a story, novel, poem from the writer's point of view, instead of from the reader's or the literary critic's. . . . There aren't many writers, ever, anywhere, but most of the rest will never read a book or see a play the same way, in the

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

> same dimension – again, after this experience. This addition of a dimension to awareness I think is the central worth of the course.[18]

For the potential teacher of composition, it would seem that this experience would be extremely valuable. Whether or not he possesses the gift for writing fiction or verse, for example, he should see from the inside, as it were, how this kind of writing is done. He will almost undoubtedly confront a few students here and there as he teaches who will have the gift and who may benefit from the ministrations of a sensitive, perceptive teacher.

Insofar as generalizations are possible about writing courses in these three forms, the following statement by Richard Scowcroft is both safe and descriptive:

> This is not to say that the writing class should be considered no class at all but merely a group of writers gathered together to work along at their own pace, according to their own instincts. If the class seems to lack a precise method, it does have assumptions. Some of these may be: that at a certain point in his career, the writer (student) can profit from discipline in his writing habits, from submitting to an imposed standard of excellence, from learning the traditions of the art he is practicing, from exchanging judgments and opinions with peer writers.[19]

Speech courses

Although courses in speech are typically not offered in departments of English, one or more speech courses are usually required of prospective elementary teachers and of secondary teachers of English. With the trend away from courses in elocution which accelerated in the early 1900's, courses in speech became more pragmatic, more directly relevant to the act of composing thought orally:

> The field of public speaking . . . had sought new vigor from the modern sciences, particularly psychology, from which it derived material for the study of audience behavior. As a result, "composition" in the public speaking class embraced audience study and analysis, an emphasis not seen in courses in written composition within departments of English.[20]

[18]Quoted by Richard Scowcroft, "Courses in Creative Writing," in *The College Teaching of English,* p. 134.

[19]*Ibid.,* p. 151.

[20]Donald K. Smith, "Origin and Development of Departments of Speech," in *History of Speech Education in America,* Karl R. Wallace, ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1954), p. 456.

By the early 1950's, communication was the vogue word which implied major stress upon the immediacy of the act of communication and upon the student himself in the act of communicating. This emphasis has meant a movement away from inert knowledge about discourse and preoccupation with superficial matters of form.[21] "The trend in courses in communication, whether in speech or writing, is in the direction of real activities and away from artificial exercises."[22]

Following is what may be a representative statement of the purpose and content of many speech fundamentals courses:

> The course in fundamentals aims to help students, as individuals, to improve their skills in everyday face-to-face communication. . . . it emphasizes the practice and criticism of speaking in a variety of forms and situations which involve social challenge to the student. . . . The purpose is training in general speech behavior and not in public speaking, public discussion, or debate, although the work of the course should contribute to the effectiveness with which a student may participate in any one of them.[23]

Presumably, then, the prospective teacher who succeeds in such a course is developing his poise in speaking extemporaneously, his skill at impromptu discussion, his techniques of speech delivery, and his critical equipment for analysis of others' speech behavior. These abilities are clearly relevant to one who would teach younger people how to handle oral language well.

Subsequent speech courses offer assorted specializations. For English teachers, the most common options are public address, discussion, and oral interpretation. Considerable agreement exists about the emphases in these courses: "The work in speech has been notably professionalized and, in spite of some doctrinal differences, standardized so that programs of various departments differ in scale and proportion more than in kind."[24] These descriptions, therefore, seem widely applicable:

> Public address – particularly extemporaneous speaking and some courses in speech composition and more fully prepared speeches,

[21]Commission on the English Curriculum, *The English Language Arts* (Vol. I of NCTE Curriculum series. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952), pp. 142-144.
[22]*Ibid.*, p. 145.
[23]*Ibid.*
[24]*Ibid.*, p. 168.

> though "platform oratory" has generally given way to more informal and occasional types.
>
> Discussion and debate – with the emphasis on group discussion, panels, and rather less on argumentation and debate . . .
>
> Oral interpretation – interpretive reading of literature, choral speaking.[25]

If only by default, there seems to be agreement among teacher education departments and agencies that one or two of the speech courses described here are adequate preparation to teach speech in lower schools. Yet there is by no means agreement about where speech teaching belongs in the lower school curriculum. The question, "What is the responsibility of the English teacher for the student's ability to express himself orally?" was one of the thirty-five basic issues posed in 1958 by members of four prestigious organizations – American Studies Association, College English Association, Modern Language Association, and National Council of Teachers of English.[26] Donald K. Smith, a specialist in preparation of teachers of speech, admitted to being baffled about how to answer these questions:

> Where is speech taught in the secondary schools? Is it a part of the English class, or is it a separate course or sequence? What is the content of the speech curriculum, and how does this relate to the content of the English curriculum?[27]

This is a bafflement of long standing, perhaps traceable directly to the date (1914) when speech teachers splintered from the National Council of Teachers of English to form the precursor

[25]*Ibid.* Lest oral interpretation seem unrelated to composition, let it be said that good oral reading is a splendid exercise in re-creation or re-composing of prose or poetry. The eye-ear relationships may be quite similar for the writer and for the oral reader.

[26]"The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English," in *Issues, Problems, and Approaches in the Teaching of English,* George Winchester Stone, Jr., ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1961), p. 13.

[27]Donald K. Smith, "English, Speech, and Language Arts: Disorder and Latter Day Sorrow," in *The Changing Role of English Education: Selected Addresses Delivered at the Second Conference on English Education,* Stanley B. Kegler, ed. (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965), p. 68.

of the present Speech Association of America. One of the separatists reported that

> teachers of English were becoming more and more aware of the fact that English is a spoken language, that they were beginning to see that "oral work, public speaking, is worth while for its own sake." But he was consistently skeptical of any suggestion that the subjects could be successfully combined under a single discipline.[28]

The essential point, though, is that oral and written composition have more principles, techniques, and purposes that unite them than separate them. Perhaps separation has some validity at the college level where specialization is the way of life, but at lower school levels the separation seems indefensible. Elementary and secondary English teachers have to teach oral *and* written language, often simultaneously. The alternative is artificiality and weakness. Because "the subjects of dialectic and rhetoric[29] had always been indifferent to the line between speaking and writing,"[30] the English teacher and the speech teacher must be the same person for all but the most specialized uses of speech. Therefore, preparation in the teaching of composition should guarantee equal competence in both speech and writing. The fact that this competence has often been missing is shown in a supporting statement for the "basic issue" question cited above: "English teachers who have had no special training in speech are assigned to teach courses in which speaking and listening occupy as much time as reading."[31]

Courses in methods of teaching English

Another of the basic issues concerns the methods course, the last of the four main components of the typical preparation program in composition. "What kind of training in teaching methods does the future secondary school English teacher need?"[32] The companion question for elementary teachers is

[28]Giles Wilkeson Gray, "Some Teachers and the Transition to Twentieth-Century Speech Education," in *History of Speech Education in America,* p. 434.

[29]Dialectic and rhetoric, in the Greek and Roman tradition, approach language as distinctively human communicative behavior; grammar, by contrast, describes the system that underlies that behavior.

[30]Smith, "English, Speech, and the Language Arts," p. 65.

[31]"The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English," p. 13.

[32]*Ibid.*, p. 17.

"How much of the teacher's training should be in education courses and how much in courses primarily devoted to language and literature?" And for prospective college English teachers: "What preparation for college teaching should the Ph.D. candidate receive?"[33] Of greatest significance, perhaps, is the fact that these questions were considered respectable enough to ask, since so many college people think that secure subject matter knowledge is all one needs to teach well.

In an examination of the adequacy of the typical college English major for preparation to teach English, George Henry asserted that the English methods course mediates; it must somehow show the prospective teacher how his previous English courses connect and how his knowledge can be made pertinent to the students he will teach.

> Very often it was the one little three-credit methods course that was battling heroically to preserve the full range of the teaching task, to remedy at the last minute before graduation the obvious defects of the English major, to bring inert English subject matter to life for the major who is imminently to be confronted by hordes of culturally deprived youth. The methods teacher, alone and helpless, often was the only one [among his colleagues in the English department] to see the full task . . . [34]

Since the 1962 meeting of college English department chairmen, there has been what might be called a trend – or the beginning of one – toward more responsibility for teacher training, and specifically the English methods course, by English departments.

> The overwhelming majority of English departments are now thoroughly committed to assuming a responsible role in the improvement of English instruction at all levels. . . .
>
> The first principle is that training in methods always proves more effective when tied to a definite subject matter than when abstracted to the level of "methods in general."[35]

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[34] George H. Henry, "English, the Life of English, and Life," *English Journal*, 52 (February 1963), 83.

[35] Wayne C. Booth, "The Undergraduate Program," in *The College Teaching of English*, pp. 221, 222.

The methods course, when it is tied to a particular subject matter field, is commonly called the "special methods" course. For trainers of elementary teachers, it has not been agreed that special methods courses in each or several of the fields included in elementary school curricula should be offered. Some education department faculties prefer to offer a single "integrated methods" course on the premise that such a course can help the prospective elementary teacher see how concepts of child development, purposes for teaching, and selected facts and concepts from subject matter fields are interrelated.[36]

Special methods can be, and often are, taught by specialists in English (or "language arts" as it is more often called in elementary school). Following is a partial list of the contents of such a course which national leaders in elementary English teacher preparation call typical:

A sketch of the history of the English language
The significance of language in the life of an individual
The development of language in young children
. . . . . .
The improvement and development of oral language in the primary grades
Oral language during the later elementary school years
Vocabulary building
Teaching the use of written language in the elementary school
    Steps in development from dictation to independent writing
    Creative and personal writing
    Practical writing and matters of form
    Methods of evaluating writing
Teaching manuscript and cursive forms of handwriting
Teaching spelling
Problems of language usage, capitalization, and punctuation[37]

Also included in the list are categories concerning reading and literature, but it is clear that this kind of course would stress elements that go into the teaching of oral and written composition.

[36]Alfred H. Grommon, ed., *The Education of Teachers of English* (Vol. V of NCTE Curriculum Series. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 107.
[37]*Ibid.*, p. 109.

Partly because not all elementary teachers take such a course as this and partly because thorough preparation in teaching composition is not possible in such a course, teachers in service express considerable interest in more work of this kind. A national sample of elementary teachers ranked a selected list of topics for courses or conferences as follows: reading, first; children's literature, second; language (grammar, usage), third; speech and oral English, fourth; writing, fifth; literature, excluding children's literature, sixth. A grouping of responses within the sample, however, showed that

> as the level of teaching assignment goes up, as years of experience increase, and *as English is included in the undergraduate major,* speech and oral English clearly gain interest as the subject for a conference or a course. This suggests that as teachers gain experience, they may come to appreciate more fully the contribution that work in oral language can make to the total English program. . . .
>
> For writing . . . interest increased with level of assignment, especially at the upper grades. . . . *Teachers with English in their undergraduate majors* are also obviously more interested in this topic . . . [38]

These conclusions reinforce the well-known but perhaps not widely valued observation that knowing more about something suggests not only more ways of understanding it but also more gaps in one's knowledge. Elementary teachers with even a little college English background (maybe in the kind of special methods course outlined above) are more aware of what they do not know. The writers who described the typical elementary language arts methods course also noted that one of the problems that has high interest for teachers at national meetings and workshops is how to evaluate compositions.

> In methods courses and student teaching under expert direction, the prospective teacher needs more specific help than he is receiving [with this problem]. . . . He does not always understand the import of the question: "Are you a proofreader or a teacher?" . . . He needs also to examine the relationship between the processes of thinking and success in writing.[39]

[38] *The National Interest and the Continuing Education of Teachers of English,* pp. 118, 122-123; italics added.

[39] *The Education of Teachers of English,* pp. 110-111.

George Henry's statement about the mediating function of the methods course, national leaders think, is equally relevant for elementary teachers and for secondary teachers.

> Lifting subject matter out of the categories of the scholar and into the sequence of the growth of children is a major function of such courses.[40]

Some of the data gathered for the 1961 NCTE report, *The National Interest and the Teaching of English,* pointed to probable weaknesses in English methods courses for secondary teachers and suggested to NCTE leaders the need for further probing. A Committee on the Secondary Methods Course was appointed in 1962 and instructed to gather more data on present course offerings. One survey conducted by the committee and another by a doctoral student supplied these data, of which the most pertinent to composition are the following:

course content as identified by instructors of English methods
teaching composition (included by 70% of the instructors)
teaching oral communication skills (22%)
teaching spelling (14%)
teaching English usage (11%)
teaching vocabulary and word study (11%)
teaching punctuation (8%)
considering semantics (5%)
teaching straight, critical, and imaginative thinking (3%)[41]

Because "composition" is so variously and flexibly defined, it is difficult to interpret these percentages. One wonders, for example, how 70 percent of the instructors could say much about teaching composition if they did not conspicuously include such subjects as critical thinking, punctuation, and vocabulary (especially if clarity of argument, adequacy of evidence, sentence intonation patterns, and diction are admitted to be vital to composing). A section of the questionnaire survey dealing with degree of emphasis on various teacher skills has some bearing upon this point. With four categories for response

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[41] William H. Evans and Michael J. Cardone, *Specialized Courses in Methods of Teaching English* (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1964), p. 11.

(much emphasis, some emphasis, no emphasis, and no answer), the methods instructors stated that they give much emphasis to the following skills:

> how to teach expository writing (reported by 67.5% of the instructors)
> how to grade themes (57.3%)
> how to correct themes (56.9%)
> how to teach critical thinking (43.1%)
> how to teach creative writing (26%)
> how to teach speech (10%)[42]

Composition is clearly being included with some prominence in English methods courses, but incomplete and partially contradictory reports about the content of these courses as they relate to composition preparation make detailed assessment difficult. It seems safe to say that many of the courses are in flux, particularly where the instructors, who are themselves often national leaders in English education, are attuned to new ideas about the teaching of composition. They no doubt alter the kind of information and the interrelations of the elements that make up the composing process as they repeat the course. The field is currently open to many new influences, and the methods course may well be the place in the prospective teacher's preparation where he becomes most aware of these new influences.

The group of leaders in secondary English education that corresponds to the group in elementary English cited earlier states that the course in methods should include content under three categories: content (or, roughly, subject matter), organization of English courses, and professional membership. Since the men who made these recommendations are themselves the authors of many of the widely used textbooks in methods courses and have taught the course for years, the categories probably reflect at least the intent of many of the instructors included in previous surveys. Following are the excerpts pertinent to preparation to teach composition.

> A good methods course impels a future teacher to learn his subject better and to learn more of it. It helps him, for example, . . . to think about teaching writing with an awareness of students' possible

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

> difficulties in content, logic, organization, sentence structure, diction, and mechanics . . . .
>
> . . . The methods course should reinforce the prospective teacher's knowledge of and skill in writing by giving him additional practice in writing exposition, by helping him recognize the relationship of written language to spoken language, by reviewing the essentials of critical thinking and problem solving and their inseparable relationship to writing, and by reviewing the essentials of English spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, especially the relationship of punctuation to intonation. It should help him identify the purposes of teaching writing in public secondary schools, recognize the importance of his setting suitable assignments, learn some methods of teaching exposition and other forms of writing, learn how to relate the teaching of writing to the rest of the English program, and know the research on the relationship between the teaching of writing and grammar.
>
> He should recognize the difference between evaluation and mere proofreading. To help him achieve this goal, the course should provide him with many opportunities to analyze examples of students' writing, to diagnose strengths and weaknesses, to become aware of reasonable levels of expectation for each grade, to suggest appropriate remedial measures, and to realize the importance of commending writing that shows clear thinking, rich content, and logical organization.
>
> . . . The methods course in English . . . should include speech in and out of the English class, e.g., class discussion, group discussion, panel presentation, oral reports, oral interpretation of literature, dramatization of literary selections, and conducting and participating in committee and club meetings. . . .
>
> . . . One purpose of teaching [writing, reading, literature, speaking, and listening] . . . is to help pupils learn to think effectively. For example, the teacher must first look upon students' writing as evidence of their thought processes and values. He should assign composition topics and require students to solve problems, evaluate evidence, analyze propaganda, and test analogies and conclusions. The teaching of composition may aid students to use techniques of problem solving if the teacher consciously tries to make it do so, if he suggests more provocative and significant topics than "My Most Embarrassing Moment," if he helps his students examine their own reasoning, and if in evaluating their compositions he emphasizes the importance of logic, evidence, generalizations, and distinguishing between fact and opinion.[43]

[43] *The Education of Teachers of English,* pp. 338-339, 341, 342.

All of this cannot be done in one three-hour methods course, and it is quite unlikely that it is being done in most college composition courses.

George Henry made a stinging comment about methods courses as they apply to college teaching. Writing in 1964, he said:

> We are reminded that for higher learning there is at present no methods course at all, and so why should there be one for high school, especially since high school under the banner of the new excellence is growing more and more like college? Though there is no course in method, obviously higher education does have a method. The issue is *whether it is so unimportant or so illusive as not needed to be examined at all.*[44]

If courses in methods of teaching college English exist at all, they are very rare. One of the most recent statements on the need for more explicit preparation to teach English in college was made by Roger P. McCutcheon in 1965. Mentioning the "growing number of graduate departments" of English that recommend or require some teaching experience for the Ph.D. in English, he noted the considerable value of a real apprentice plan. If such a scheme is well planned, the graduate student, perhaps in his second year, would be assigned to an acknowledged master teacher from the English department and would work closely with him on all phases of teaching and preparation for teaching, including the planning of readings, making tests, reading students' papers, and conferring with students.

> Such an apprenticeship can lead to a teaching assignment, most probably in a freshman English course. This teaching will be to some degree supervised, and it may be supplemented by an introductory course in college teaching given (one hopes) by members of the English department.[45]

If even half of the complaints of college freshmen about the quality of instruction in their freshman composition courses are valid, the need for more intense and sustained attention to methodology of teaching composition in college is undeniable.

[44]George H. Henry, "A Way of Preparing an English Teacher," in *The Changing Role of English Education,* p. 58.

[45]Roger P. McCutcheon,"Graduate Programs in English," in *The College Teaching of English,* p. 252.

THE ACTUAL JOB OF TEACHING COMPOSITION

Throughout this just-completed critique of current preparation programs for the teaching of composition has run the thread of dissatisfaction and inadequacy. Most often, this dissatisfaction is viewed from the perspective of the college environment: what ought to constitute a good college course and how college instructors can do a good job of teaching composition skills to adults. Occasionally, as in excerpts from *The National Interest and The Continuing Education of Teachers of English,* there has been word from the field – reflections or comments upon the relevance and adequacy of college courses as preparation for the actual job of teaching. Anyone who has been privy to school teachers' ruminations about the quality of their preparation for teaching knows that they are usually negative.

Obvious as the suggestion might seem, it now appears that only a thorough and perceptive examination of what a teacher's job actually is – be he elementary, secondary, or freshman composition teacher – can properly determine a substantial part of a teacher's preparation. Particularly is this true in a time when communication media are proliferating in character and number and when social conditions are altering drastically. Concepts of teacher preparation based upon precedent or upon arbitrary notions of what a teacher ought to be, know, and do will not serve.

If one is to judge by looking at widely used textbooks in grammar and composition (the usual linking, apparently based on the premise that the surest means to better composition is thorough and repeated inoculations of grammar), by examining school district curriculum guides (which frequently look like the tables of contents of grammar and composition books), and by listening to teachers, he quickly becomes convinced that the teaching of composition is in splendid disarray. Teachers readily admit that they are floundering; they know they aren't getting the results they should, and they know that what they do in class seems to have little perceptible effect upon pupils' capacity or desire to write. (In their frankest moments, teachers admit that desire to write is in inverse relationship to "help" given in learning to write.) Granted, many of the teachers who are most desperate, or merely resigned, about the teaching of composition did not have the "good" preparation program described in the

preceding section. Nevertheless, the strong possibility exists that even those who did have such a program do not adequately understand composition from the composer's point of view – from the standpoint of the processes (psychological and linguistic) that underlie composition. Furthermore, they may never really have perceived and understood the special forms of these processes as they operate in children and adolescents or the motives for composition which may be unique to these age groups. If these understandings became the orientation of a part of the teacher preparation program, there might be some substantial changes in the kinds of courses and the experiences which prospective teachers have.

With allowances for those English teachers who never fit the generalizations applied to most, the usual procedure in teaching written composition in secondary school is as follows: The teacher suggests one or more topics for an expository "theme," often trying to find connections with literature recently studied in class. These topics might be discussed so that pupils could suggest possible ways of developing the topics. Although some of their individual planning might be done in class, most of the writing, revision (if any), and recopying would be done outside of class. On a specified date, they would turn in the papers, usually aware that they must meet the deadline, a minimum number of words requirement, and minimum standards of format. When the teacher receives the papers, he causes them to disappear while he reads and "corrects" them. During that time, which probably runs to several days because the teacher has several classes and not much time to give to the papers, little would be said in class about the act of writing just completed. When the papers are returned, they have mechanical errors indicated, some marginal comments and a summary comment, and a letter grade. The teacher may read a few of the papers aloud, asking pupils to comment upon them, or he may ditto one or two papers for class analysis. The follow-up might include some rewriting of papers or, more likely, certain textbook exercises designed to improve sentence structure, diction, paragraph organization, and the like. These exercises are nearly always deductive in form, their applicability to students' writing assumed but unspecified. The process is repeated with minor variations as often during the school year as time and the teacher's endurance allow.

No part of this process may be intrinsically bad; some parts of it may help to improve students' writing. Even in skilled hands, though, it smacks of artificiality, irrelevance, and onerousness for everyone. The chances for real enthusiasm about writing, for a sense of important communication between writer and reader, are minimal.

The process in college freshman composition is similar, except that it is even less likely that there will be class discussion about prewriting and postwriting stages. Topics are assigned; themes are written outside of class; themes are returned; discussions concern the literature being read.

Elementary teachers tend to be rather freer, allowing children to write in a wide variety of forms and doing a good deal of oral sharing of the written products. Correction of "errors," however, tends to be rigorous, on the grounds that children should learn mechanics early.

Speech composition, where it is taught in any overt way in English classes, tends to be limited to set speeches before the class or to panel presentations. Written outlines are usually de rigueur, and considerable attention is given to matters of delivery. The actual process of composing thoughts in speech gets little attention.

These images of the composition teacher in action have grown through precedent, through imitation, and, probably, from a certain sense of inevitability. Insofar as the inevitable must be accepted or put up with, the system probably seems right to many teachers, the best that can be done within practical limitations of number of pupils, time, and resources. Because of the inescapable dissatisfactions that many teachers feel, however, alternatives should be welcome. Perhaps composition teachers are ready to break with precedent and to reassess everything they do in teaching oral and written composition, from statement of purposes to minutest elements of teaching technique. The actual job of teaching composition might be different from what most teachers have thought.

The report to the profession of the Anglo-American Seminar on the Teaching of English (the "Dartmouth Seminar," 1966) startled a good many American teachers who thought they were au courant with modern English teaching. John Dixon in *Growth through English* epitomized the point of view of many leaders in the National Association for the Teaching of English (Great

Britain), one which proved to be powerful and difficult to refute at Dartmouth. His view of the English classroom (and not just in Britain) is markedly different from the usual American view of it. With emphasis upon the *process* of learning and using language, upon the need for genuineness and spontaneity, and upon the absence of dominance by a teacher, he summarized his model for the English classroom thus:

> Language is learnt in operation, not by dummy runs. In English, pupils meet to share their encounters with life, and to do this effectively they move freely between dialogue and monologue – between talk, drama and writing; and literature, by bringing new voices into the classroom, adds to the store of shared experience. Each pupil takes from the store what he can and what he needs. In so doing he learns to use language to build his own representational world and works to make this fit reality as he experiences it. Problems with the written medium for language raise the need for a different kind of learning. But writing implies a message: the means must be associated with the end, as part of the same lesson. A pupil turns to the teacher he trusts for confirmation of his own doubts and certainties in the validity of what he has said and written; he will also turn to the class, of course, but an adult's experience counts for something. In ordering and composing situations that in some way symbolize life as we know it, we bring order and composure to our inner selves. When a pupil is steeped in language in operation we expect, as he matures, a conceptualizing of his earlier awareness of language, and with this perhaps new insight into himself (as creator of his own world).[46]

In this view, one sees composition much less as an end in itself than it seems in most American classrooms. One does not learn the elements of good speaking and writing so much because they are assignments given by the teacher as because they somehow enable one to make more sense out of experience. Language is truly the means for confronting and grasping experience, and the need to confront it is not imposed by edict.

The implications for organizing and guiding a class this way are numerous and probably for many teachers unsettling. Gone would be the composition textbooks, the codified rules for writing and speaking that are to be followed in predetermined order;

[46]John Dixon, *Growth through English* (Reading, England: National Association for the Teaching of English, 1967), p. 13.

gone would be a curriculum established for a grade level and a year which specifies terminology to be learned and particular exercises to be done; gone would be arbitrary levels of expectation for language performance. Immediacy and relevance of experience through language would be the chief criteria for selection, ordering, and assessment of activities. The teacher would now be operating subtly and indirectly in a workshop arrangement.

Perhaps English construed this way would not have been so startling to American teachers if they had known about or recalled a notable publication from 1935. *An Experience Curriculum in English,* published for the National Council of Teachers of English, is a document which prefigures the Dartmouth Seminar and the Dixon book. The title is an honest representation of its orientation and intent: "School and college curriculums should consist of experiences."[47] Immediacy and relevance are the criteria for selecting, arranging, and guiding these experiences; communication through language is acknowledged and welcomed as the natural medium of integrating school with everyday life.

This curriculum is neither parochial nor limiting, although some of the objectives need updating to suit new communication media and knowledge about language. In the two sections of the book that are most relevant to composition ("Creative Expression" and "Communication"), the writers have devised primary or social objectives and enabling objectives. The former describe "experience strands" which are thought to be relevant to every individual who is in an English classroom; the latter are techniques which are "accessories to the life experiences."[48] If the major value of a written curriculum guide is to suggest to a teacher in an adaptable but specific way what his pupils might accomplish, then this guide is valuable. All of the objectives are stated in what is now popularly known as behavioral terms: that is, statements about what the pupils will do with language rather than what the teacher will do or vaguely hope for. They are arranged in cumulative sequence according to degree of

[47]W. Wilbur Hatfield, *An Experience Curriculum in English* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1935), p. 3.
[48]*Ibid.*, p. 6.

complexity or sophistication, but they are not rigidly assigned to level or time of year. They leave entirely to the teacher's ingenuity and judgment the activities or materials which a group of pupils might use in learning to compose. It would be possible to place pupils' performance in composition against these objectives for assessment, though they do not imply the possibility of precise measurement. ("Measures must cover something more than progress in the mechanics of composition and the incidents in and facts about literature; they must measure composition power, social spirit and poise, perception of beauty, and habitual choice of worthy literature."[49])

An examination of the composition objectives – and their implications – from *An Experience Curriculum* and close attention to Dixon's arguments are useful for a new approach to composition teaching: these may be potent sources for a description of the actual job of teaching composition. And this description, in turn, may have deep significance for preparation of teachers of composition.

One of Dixon's starting points is the unstartling observation that talk underlies all subjects in school. Talk (not "speech," for that word suggests more formal activities and standards than should underlie everyday classroom talk) is the matrix and the medium for grasping, shaping, and exchanging experience. But since we need to recreate experience in order to shape it, drama goes with talk. Most often it will be improvised drama, since students will be making the drama themselves. Gesture and movement, added to talk, allow the pupil to assume a variety of dramatic roles so that he can try on new possibilities for response to experience. Language, therefore, operates in a much richer context than in the usual restricting classroom. Learning becomes more complex as interpretations multiply and interact.

From the public activity which is drama (acting out experience and responding directly to someone else) one may move to the more private and abstract activities which are writing and reading. In Dixon's explanation:

> In class the individual takes up from the discussion of experience what will make sense of his own world. This process of internalizing

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

> is developed and extended by writing. To write then is to move from the social and shared work to an opportunity for private and individual work. But the private work takes its meaning from what has gone on before: thus, as we shall see, writing-assignments without a background of discussion and shared experience are unlikely to elicit much response from many children and young people.
>
> This is why the splitting up of English activities and the neglect of talk and drama has had such disastrous effects on writing. While speech is the medium of home and neighborhood interaction, writing is largely or completely the medium of the school, and the child whose school writing is stultified has little else to draw on. Thus most of us have observed, as Holbrook did in backward classes, pupils whose gossip is full of vitality but whose writing (like that of many a Freshman English course) is felt to be an occasion "for correcting the propriety and accuracy of the language used." We can view it this way: a sense of the social system of writing has so inhibited and overawed many teachers that they have never given a pupil the feeling that what he writes is his own. And yet, paradoxically, while in speaking we may be expected casually to pick up and adopt from others the phrases and attitudes that pass as currency, in writing we work on our own, with our own resources.[50]

If a teacher is to read these words and not immediately imagine chaos and a regrettable lack of direct instruction in composition, he must have a different kind of preparation and attitude toward teaching from the traditional. Dixon admits:

> At present, college and university education in both countries, diverse as the systems are, is creating barriers to the teaching of English as envisaged in this report. Clearly students who intend to teach the subject need wide experience in drama, and particularly improvised drama; continuing experience and encouragement in imaginative writing; and a confident grounding in the purposive talk that arises from group learning in an English workshop.
>
> We seriously doubt whether more than a minority of teachers in training approach English in this way.[51]

If anything, the teacher's subject matter background, his understanding and sensitivity to language, his awareness of the dynamic relationships of a classroom in which language is in

[50] *Growth through English*, p. 44.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

operation should be much greater than is now typically demanded. Teaching according to the precepts of Dixon is much more difficult than "regular" class teaching because it does not deny what is really going on in a class under a mask of uniformity. For all the talk of individualization in American classrooms, very little of it has been genuinely achieved. The Dixon ideas literally overturn most of the strategies that are thought proper in American schools.

Fitting in congenially with the Dixon view, however, are the ideas about composition from *An Experience Curriculum in English.* "Creative expression" is defined as "the translation of experience into words" and is differentiated from other forms of composition "by the absence of an external or utilitarian motive."[52]

> Although there is no definite boundary between creative expression and utilitarian communication, the general distinction is between the writing and speaking which is done to relieve one's own mind and feelings, to share some outward or inner experience that is too good to keep, and the writing or speaking which is done for a purpose beyond itself. The distinction does not imply that utilitarian writing and speech must lack charm or that either communication or expressionistic writing is superior to the other.[53]

Most important for the teacher's comprehension and use of these definitions are these additional principles:

> The art of communication can be mastered only through experience in actual, normal communication, and more practice in speaking and writing is valueless unless it arises directly from real communication and issues promptly in further communication. . . .
>
> . . . In the arrangement of material the traditional "logical order" must frequently give way to a psychological order made necessary by a consideration of the human element involved in the situation.[54]

Applied to a typical classroom procedure, these principles might lead to a sequence such as this:

> 1. Making the pupils conscious of a present, worthy occasion for communication. Sometimes this occasion must be created by the teacher; frequently it needs only to be brought to attention.

[52] *An Experience Curriculum,* p. 110.
[53] *Ibid.,* pp. 134-135.
[54] *Ibid.,* pp. 133, 135.

2. Letting pupils attempt to meet the situation by speaking or writing.

3. Giving advice and assistance as the pupils prepare (if the occasion permits preparation) and as they write (if the occasion calls for writing). This includes helping them to perceive the techniques which they can use to advantage.

4. Helping pupils to realize that the excellence of their work must be measured in terms of the effect of their efforts upon their audience, and pointing out the causes of their (usually partial) success or failure.

5. Introducing at any favorable time specific practice in a skill which the pupils realize the worth of but which they have not mastered.

6. Noting growth, chiefly by comparing success on this and previous similar occasions.[55]

A sampling of objectives may help to show how the practices advocated in this typical procedure could be related to more particular goals. Although each of the following objectives appears under a different category, it is clear that they are related by a common experience strand, namely observing and reporting on one's observations. Chapter titles and subheadings have been retained.

Creative expression experiences, kindergarten-grade 6

Primary Objective: To explore the world of sensory impressions and to tell about what is interesting in it.

Enabling Objectives: To observe accurately number, form, size and action. To plan, with materials at hand, an imitation of something known – a house or an engine out of blocks. To choose something related to the work or play at hand to tell about, and to concentrate on the experience. To use an adequate vocabulary of name and descriptive words. To enjoy the activity.

Typical Activities: To handle objects in the classroom (bunnies, little chickens, kittens, flowers, blocks, etc.) and to tell what one has discovered by looking and touching. To play with objects – making new arrangements (as with blocks), sorting (materials, colors, sizes), and imitating (playing house, store, fire-engine) – and to tell about what one is doing. To tell short accounts of experiences with objects, play and home activities.[56]

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

Creative expression experiences, grades 7-12

Primary Objective: To develop an interest in one's own sense-relations to nature and the objective world, and to communicate them to others in sense-arousing diction.

Enabling Objectives: To observe more fully and accurately color, sound, rhythm, texture, odor, taste, etc., in nature to express reactions in concrete and specific diction. To discriminate more accurately between impressions received through the different senses, and express such impressions with well-chosen words of the senses. To choose from a mass of sense-data details which create a special sensory effect – for example, intense gloom, or intense heat – and to use these details to build up the impression for the reader.[57]

Speech experiences, kindergarten-grade 6: reporting

Social Objective: To report to the class such independent observations, as of making flour, cooking at home, a rabbit's (or other animal's) behavior.

Enabling Objectives: To think through the activity before starting to speak. To follow the time order closely, for the sake of clearness. To further guard against fragmentary sentences by extending the concept of the sentence. To reduce the tendency to speak and especially to write run-on sentences whether with or without *and*, by sharpening the concept of the sentence as the expression of a single thought. [That objective will need some rethinking in the light of modern linguistic definitions.] To use gesture when it will contribute to clearness. To stand easily erect.

Writing experiences, elementary level, kindergarten-grade 6: reports, reviews, summaries, and outlines

Social Objective: To write for a class journal or individual record an account of a visit, an excursion, a project, etc.

Enabling Objectives: To select the most important incidents or details of the excursion. To begin some sentences with adverbial modifiers, usually such expressions of time as *yesterday, just then, at eight o'clock.* To capitalize the names of persons and the pronoun *I*. In writing a date, to use a comma between the day of the month and the year.

Writing experiences, grades 7-12: social letters

Social Objective: To write an interesting and informing travel letter to one's family, to friends, or to strangers in other cities or other countries.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

> Enabling Objectives: To select from the day's or the week's varied experiences those details which the family and friends would find interesting, and to omit less important happenings. To share the new scenes and the new acquaintances with the old friends. To find and describe the center of interest and to give the mood produced in the writer. To interpret and relate the new to the shared old. Or, to see with the traveler's eye the familiar scenes of one's own village, selecting points of interest and describing them to the contemporary in another city or a far country (students' international correspondence). To use specific nouns and vivid verbs. To use gerunds for compactness and smoothness. To use subject noun clauses in statements *about* ideas. To practice consistently the use of the comma to punctuate parenthetical expressions (including non-restrictive modifiers), expressions out of order, appositives, direct quotations, and the members of compound sentences.[58]

These statements of objectives have many virtues over the textbooks and curriculum guides that have purported to describe and aid composition. If interpreted and used with the point of view explained by Dixon, they maintain the teacher's and the pupils' focus on the immediate experience, always keeping the instrumental means for rendering that experience in subservient position. They provide clustering points for many different specific experiences and many different ways of accomplishing the objective. They suggest related but fluidly connected activities which pupils might undertake according to preference, background, and competence. The speaker/writer and audience relationship is always specified or otherwise made prominent. No teacher or class would be artificially limited in means of accomplishing these objectives or in the time taken to do so.

An Experience Curriculum in English concludes with an appendix on teacher education in English which partially explores the implications of the recommended curriculum. Two of the most notable recommendations still seem new and relatively untried in American teacher education institutions; moreover, they coincide nicely with Dixon's concluding observations about teacher preparation. In speaking of the education which teachers receive in college, the writers state that "even more than in the preceding years, powers and controls spring from an experience

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

curriculum, a curriculum in which experience must implement instruction."[59] "Implement" here means literally a wide variety of kinds of experiences, not just sitting in college classes, listening to lectures, and reading in the library. It means *doing* – drama, art, speech, journalistic and literary publication, field work, travel courses, and so on.

A second recommendation concerns the amount of time needed to become a competent teacher of English. Although they speak of courses and quarter or semester hours, the writers state that such convenient measures are often irrelevant to teacher preparation.

> To make acceptable teachers of themselves may take some persons four years, others much longer. Quality takes precedence over quantity. Teacher education is, more than other college divisions, incommensurable in terms of years, semester or quarter credits, or courses passed.[60]

Their descriptions of desirable preparation programs for teachers are divided into four groups: elementary school service; secondary school service in subjects other than English (where "English figures as an indispensable supporting subject"); high school positions in English (and perhaps one other teaching field); instructorships in college English. It is evident that the writers demand strong competence in the writing and speaking skills coupled with as much knowledge of language and literature as suits the anticipated specialization and as assures a "cultivated personality."

Genuine acceptance of the ideas about teaching composition in *Growth through English* and *An Experience Curriculum in English,* then, would considerably alter beliefs and operative principles for teachers and trainers of teachers. Since teacher preparation in composition is the focus here, an exploration follows of the ways in which preparation programs might be changed and of the forces which seem to demand these changes. The two sources just explored will remain as the reference points for the actual job of teaching composition toward which the programs should lead.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 315.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 319.

THE FORCE OF THE PROFESSION

In a collection of "classic statements on teacher preparation in English," a number of *English Journal* (April 1968) included statements dating from 1958. Issued by several organizations which were in some way related to English teaching, they are variously specific or vague as to the kind of person who should teach and the nature of his preparation. Each of these classic statements served as background for the most recent and elaborate of such documents. It is called "English Teacher Preparation Study: Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English – 1968" and was produced under the joint leadership of three organizations: the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the Modern Language Association (MLA), with the cooperation of Western Michigan University. The guidelines were arrived at through a series of four regional conferences and a national meeting, as well as through numerous conferences, consultations, and evaluations by members of the profession at many levels and in many agencies. It is the most broadly representative statement that has ever been made about teacher preparation in English.

As a means of explaining the significance and possible influence of the ETPS Guidelines, Albert Marckwardt placed them against a five-part definition of "profession" and found them generally creditable. He noted the following features of the Guidelines which are relevant to the concept of a profession:

1. emphasis is clearly upon skill and competence rather than courses or credit hours.
2. insistence upon literacy; the teacher should be able to speak and write well.
3. insistence upon underlying theory . . . [e.g.] familiarity with the principles of classical rhetoric and an understanding of their relationship to modern rhetorics.
4. critical awareness of one's self, of language, of literature, of the world.
5. appropriate insistence upon continued study, based upon the concept of growth in the profession as an ongoing process.[61]

[61] Albert H. Marckwardt, "The English Teacher as Professional," in "Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English," *English Journal*, 57 (April 1968), 482-483, *passim*.

If it can be properly said, then, that the Guidelines are a cogent statement of an ideal in professional preparation, they can serve as a criterion for evaluating present programs and a stimulus to development of new ones. It is unlikely that any existing preparation programs fully meet the standard implied in this document.

Following are the portions which apply most directly to composition, with composition being defined in the preface to the document as "oral and written composition and the relations of these two modes to rhetorical theory."[62]

Guideline I epitomizes personal qualities which any teacher of English should have, emphasizing particularly knowledge and skill with language and in the liberal arts and sciences. Preparation in speech gets special attention.

Guideline II states that elementary and secondary teachers should develop their own skills "above the level of freshman English" without specifying in any direct way the degree of competence that is expected. That definition is left to the training institutions.

Guideline III refers entirely to literature.

> Guideline IV: The teacher of English at any level should have skill in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and an understanding of the nature of language and of rhetoric.
>
> A. He should have developed skill in speaking and writing.
>
> 1. He should have had supervised practice in speaking and writing in a variety of modes.
> 2. He should have acquired a functional understanding of the activities essential to the composing process, and of the qualities and properties of children's writing.
> 3. He should have had supervised practice in describing, analyzing, and evaluating, for purposes of teaching, various kinds of speaking and writing, both historical and contemporary.
> 4. He should have had special work appropriate to the level at which he will teach:
>
> (a) to develop his skill in reading aloud and in storytelling;
> (b) to develop his ability to help students control and expand their linguistic resources for conversation and other forms of oral discourse, such as storytelling, informal or struc-

[62]"English Teacher Preparation Study: Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English – 1968," in "Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English," p. 529.

tured discussions and reports, or fully developed speeches for public occasions;

(c) to develop his ability to help students find adequate means of expression in both imaginative and factual writing;

(d) to increase his awareness of the origins, the objectives, and the potentialities of composition teaching in the schools;

(e) to prepare him to teach spelling, handwriting, and other conventions of written expression.

5. He should have had instruction in writing beyond the college freshman level, either through an advanced course in composition or through supervised individual instruction and practice.

B. Not only should he be prepared in the technical and expository aspects of composition, but he should also have explored the creative and liberating functions of speaking and writing and the relations between such creativity and other forms of expression, e.g., painting and pantomime.

C. He should have a well-balanced descriptive and historical knowledge of the English language.

1. He should have some understanding of phonology, morphology, and syntax; the sources and development of the English vocabulary; semantics; and social, regional, and functional varieties of English usage.
2. He should be acquainted with methods of preparation and uses of dictionaries and grammars.
3. He should be well-grounded in one grammatical system and have a working acquaintance with at least one other system.
4. He should have studied basic principles of language learning in order to apply his knowledge at various grade levels to the problems of those learning to speak, listen, read, and write to a variety of audiences.
5. He should have an understanding of the respective domains of linguistics and rhetoric, and of the range of choice available within the structure of the language.

D. He should be able to utilize his knowledge of language and of language learning to develop his own and his students' ability to read and to listen. His knowledge should include an understanding of the components of reading and listening processes and of the variety of ways in which people read and listen.

E. He should have acquired a functional understanding of the nature and substance of rhetoric.

1. He should have some acquaintance with the principles of classical rhetoric, and should understand their relationship to modern rhetorics.

2. He should have some acquaintance with the influence of rhetorical theory on the teaching of composition.
3. He should have sufficient acquaintance with the principles of rhetoric and the nature of the writing process to be able to use the former, where relevant, in analyzing the latter or products thereof, whether written or oral.
4. He should have sufficient acquaintance with the principles of rhetoric, as related to the writing process, to be able to use them, where relevant, in his own writing and speaking, and also in his teaching. [pp. 534-535]

Guideline V refers to an understanding of the relationship of child and adolescent development to English teaching.

Guideline VI includes several points relating to methods of teaching English and supervised teaching, among them:

> He should have learned how to correlate the contents and skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing with one another and with other subjects in the curriculum.
>
> He should have studied and practiced ways to foster creativity in the speaking and writing of his students. [p. 536]

No part of the Guidelines seems to contradict the point of view toward composition teaching expressed in *Growth through English* and *An Experience Curriculum in English.* Indeed, their stress upon broad and deep competence in language and culture, on imagination and ingenuity, on correlating language uses and experience, on encouraging creativity, and on familiarity with underlying theory are essential to the recommendations in those two books. Intelligent application of the Guidelines in teacher education institutions would not lead to identical programs, but it would produce teachers more nearly in the Dixon image.

Previous "classic statements" about English teacher preparation were much less explicit and detailed about preparation to teach composition. Excerpts summarize the treatment and show the relative lack of specific benchmarks.

From "A Standard of Preparation to Teach English," prepared by the NCTE Committee on the Preparation and Certification of Teachers:

> In language [the teacher of English] should have:
>
> . . . An informed command of the arts of language – rhetoric and logic; ability to speak and write language which is not only unified,

> coherent, and correct but also responsible, appropriate to the situation, and stylistically effective.[63]

From "Major Recommendations for Educating Teachers of English for the Elementary School," prepared by the NCTE Commission on the English Curriculum:

> In English he should have ample practice in the effective use of both oral and written language for socially valid purposes . . . . For this purpose . . . all elementary school teachers [should have] . . . at least one course in advanced composition beyond freshman English . . . and one in the principles of speech, including attention to creative dramatics and the oral interpretation of literature.[64]

From "Major Recommendations for Educating Teachers of English for the Secondary School," prepared by the same NCTE Commission:

> The minimum major or minor in English should include at least one course in composition beyond the freshman year, courses in the history of the language and in modern grammar, and training in public speaking . . .[65]

From "Recommendations to Improve the Quality of Instruction," written by the Commission on English of the College Entrance Examination Board:

> That certification to teach secondary school English be based on evidence of creditable work, at the minimum, of the following kinds:
>
> formal study of the history and structure of the English language
>
> study in rhetoric and composition above the level of freshman course
>
> . . . . . .
>
> at least one course in speech and the oral interpretation of literature.[66]

"Qualifications of Secondary School Teachers of English: A Preliminary Statement," produced by the Illinois State-wide Curriculum Center for Preparation of Secondary School Teachers of English (ISCPET), states competencies under five headings. Within each are three levels of competency. The "minimal" level

[63] *The National Interest and the Teaching of English,* pp. 40-41.
[64] *The Education of Teachers of English,* pp. 18-19.
[65] *Ibid.,* p. 144.
[66] Commission on English, *Freedom and Discipline in English* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1965), p. 10.

of qualification describes competencies expected of a secondary school English teacher who has no more than a minor in English. The "good" level of qualification is thought to be reasonable for able or fairly able English majors whose preparation has been of average or better quality. The "superior" level of qualification applies to highly able persons whose college preparation was of very good or excellent quality.

Knowledge and skill in written composition:[67]

Minimal	Good	Superior
Ability to recognize such characteristics of good writing as substantial and relevant content; organization; clarity; appropriateness of tone; and accuracy in mechanics and usage	A well-developed ability to recognize such characteristics of good writing as substantial and relevant content; organization; clarity; appropriateness of tone; and accuracy in mechanics and usage	In addition to "good" competencies, a detailed knowledge of theories and history of rhetoric and of the development of English prose
A basic understanding of the processes of composing	Perception of the complexities in the processes of composing	Perception of the subtleties, as well as the complexities, in the processes of composing
Ability to analyze and to communicate to students strengths and weaknesses in their writing	Ability to analyze in detail the strengths and weaknesses in the writing of students and to communicate the analysis effectively	Ability to give highly perceptive analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in the writing of students, to communicate this exactly, and to motivate students toward greater and greater strengths
Ability to produce writing with at least a modicum of the characteristics noted above	Proficiency in producing writing with at least considerable strength in the characteristics noted above	Proficiency in producing writing of genuine power; ability and willingness to write for publication

A section headed "Knowledge and Skill in Oral Communication" in the same article touches upon principles of group

[67] J. N. Hook, "Qualifications of Secondary School Teachers of English: A Preliminary Statement," *College English*, 27 (November 1965), 167.

discussion, oral reporting, panel discussions, classroom dramatizations, and oral reading but gives little detail on qualitative differences in competence.

Finally, the Dartmouth Seminar (cited earlier) agreed upon:

> The importance of teachers of English at all levels informing themselves about the scholarship and research in the English language so that their classroom approaches may be guided accordingly.
>
> The need for radical reform in programs of teacher education, both preservice and inservice.[68]

Although all of these statements and recommendations about teacher preparation in English may be classic, they are also very recent. They are not without precedent, however. A few prominent members of the profession had made statements remarkably similar in spirit and intent several years previous to 1958, the earliest date of any of the quoted statements.

Alfred Grommon, president of NCTE in 1968, referred to Fred Scott, the first president of NCTE, as one who in 1903 made "a giant stride" in defining specialized preparation for a teacher of English "reaching far into this century."[69] His ideas about such parts of the preparation program as methods of teaching and evaluating writing and the importance of studying the "psychology of speech" anticipate several of the current recommendations in the ETPS Guidelines.

Grommon also cited Walter Barnes who was active about 1920 for statements which are consistent with the Dartmouth Seminar recommendations.

> Barnes in 1918-1920 emphasizes throughout his lectures the importance of talk, the use of English in everyday life, idiomatic speech, the merits of effective, vigorous slang, relating writing to students' personal experiences, the "paramount importance of oral expression."
>
> This is the spirit, the attitude he wanted colleges to help foster in students preparing to teach English. . . . It is not the program he asked for in college English departments but the freshness of out-

[68]"Resolutions of the Anglo-American Conference on the Teaching and Learning of English," in "Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English," p. 550.

[69]Alfred H. Grommon, "A History of the Preparation of Teachers of English," in "Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English," p. 490.

> look, the commitment to the acceptance of children as they are, the importance of making all aspects of English relevant to and meaningful in the lives of students – all these qualities now so urgently in demand among teachers today are what recommend Barnes' contributions to the attention of those interested in preparing students to move into the plains, suburbs, or ghettos to teach English.[70]

Another leader of NCTE whose ideas, expressed in the 1930's, are a part of the precedent is Helene V. Hartley. Among her many suggestions for appropriate teacher preparation are these:

> As a teacher of speaking and writing, he should of course be able to speak and write effectively and should be prepared to give much more attention to oral communication in his classes than is generally the case in English classes. And his experiences and preparation in writing should include the more creative as well as expository modes and should help him develop a genuine interest in fostering the individual pupil's creativeness.[71]

AN EXEMPLARY PROGRAM OF PREPARATION IN COMPOSITION

A four-year college program cannot guarantee that most prospective teachers will be adequately prepared to teach composition; therefore, to complete an exemplary program of preparation may take longer than four years. An institution might wish to retain students until they have met the stipulated competencies, or it might wish to require the teacher after he has begun teaching to return to the institution until he has met the suitable level of competence.

The exemplary program will develop competencies in four major categories:

1. literacy (or performance with language)
2. knowledge of rhetoric and linguistics
3. knowledge of psychology and philosophy of language
4. pedagogy

[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 495-496.
[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 502-503.

These competencies may be developed in courses of various kinds and through certain types of experiences which may or may not be directly included with the courses. They should be measured near the end of the preparation period by several means, but in no case simply through the accumulated record of passed courses.

The approach used in developing this exemplary program was first to establish the ETPS Guidelines as the principal reference but also to think beyond them, to bring them even closer to the actual job of teaching composition and to specific preparatory experiences. This design of a program is consistent with the proposal made by Wayne Booth as he considered a possible consensus among college English departments for programs that ought to be developed. He outlined a series of statements which describe explicitly the skills needed by every student of literature and language. Insofar as these skills can be developed in courses, he would have each English department make its own list of recommended courses and readings pertinent to each category of skill. His suggestions for assessment were correlated with this shift from coverage to competence; they include a senior comprehensive examination and a senior thesis.[72]

This exemplary program description is specific enough for any training institution to interpret what the composition teacher is supposed to be able to do, but it leaves open to the institution (1) courses to be offered or required, (2) means for accommodating other experiences, (3) sequence of courses in students' programs, and (4) qualitative criteria to be established for assessing competence. The description is, of course, limited to preparation of teachers in composition; their preparation in literature and in reading skills is complementary. Furthermore, the description applies to prospective teachers in elementary school, secondary school, and college freshman English; consistent with the Guidelines, the same types of competence are expected of all these teachers with differentiation for level suggested only in minor details of the program.

Literacy. This category applies to the prospective teacher's own skill in performing with language. The components are

[72]Wayne C. Booth, "The Undergraduate Program," in *The College Teaching of English*, pp. 198-229.

expository prose, oral exposition, writing in a variety of modes, and speech in a variety of modes. Competence can be assessed through a folio of writings; sound tape recordings and/or videotape recordings of oral performances; observation records by college instructors, by other students, and by the student himself; and a senior thesis.

Knowledge of rhetoric and language. These two academic fields are combined because together they provide the student with the theories and techniques for analysis of discourse. The components are rhetorical theory and practice, and scientific language study. Competence can be assessed through a comprehensive examination (written, oral, or both).

Knowledge of psychology and philosophy of language. These two academic fields are combined because together they may suggest for the student an understanding of why people use language and of how and why language ability develops. The study of philosophy of language, in particular, may provide the student with a unifying view of language which can otherwise elude him. Competence can be assessed through a comprehensive examination (written, oral, or both).

Pedagogy. His study of pedagogy should draw upon and refine the prospective teacher's capacity to know and to do. It will consist, as it always has, of theory and practice. Assessment of competence is possible through a comprehensive examination; a senior thesis, the same thesis listed under "literacy," above; videotapes of his performance with groups of younger students; and a folio of samples of his work with students.

Experiences. It is important that the prospective teacher have certain kinds of experiences directly relevant to his teaching of composition. They may occur as part of his work in courses, or they may be acquired in addition to the courses; in either case, they are not extra requirements but an integral part of his preparation program. Evidence of the student's having had these experiences may be accumulated through observation reports by the student or another observer and through tangible products of the experiences.

A few administrative considerations should precede more detailed explanation of the exemplary program since they are important to its proper use:

1. The folios of work, tape recordings of performances, and observation reports should be available to interviewers for

teaching positions. Especially as qualified English teachers and supervisors do the interviewing for prospective English teachers, these pieces of evidence of competence will be pertinent and extremely useful. This material may also be valuable in planning inservice and graduate work.

2. Course grades or credits should be recognized by college instructors and by the prospective teachers as only tentative indications of competence. A pass/fail designation (instead of letter grades) at the completion of each course would probably help to emphasize this tentativeness. Such a system might also correct the present practice of undiscriminating reliance on accumulated credits and inconsistent standards of performance.

3. College faculty members who help in any way to prepare teachers of composition should be assessed for their attainment of competence in all the areas specified for prospective teachers. Since many college teachers have never had the opportunity or the occasion to acquire all of these competencies, they should somehow set about acquiring them.

Since the Guidelines and this exemplary program of preparation to teach composition are based upon development of competence, the elaborated description of the program should suggest as explicitly as possible the competencies to be acquired. Therefore, in each of the sections that follow, the lists that fill out each of the four categories are knowledge or skill descriptions. They are also minimal and open-ended lists which may be supplemented as the aspirations of the training institution and the teacher candidate rise. Each statement is to be preceded by "The student will."

Literacy

Expository prose:

1. Write lucidly and persuasively about ideas.
2. Select and synthesize evidence critically from various sources (including other writers' ideas).
3. Criticize his own writing for clarity, accuracy, and grace.
4. Show mastery of the conventions of writing (spelling, punctuation, and the like).

Oral exposition:

1. Explain an idea lucidly and fluently in a formal speech or a symposium before an audience.

2. Contribute cogently and tactfully to an impromptu discussion or conversation.
3. Participate constructively in a panel discussion.
4. Show mastery of the rudiments of oral delivery (e.g., volume, enunciation, gesture, physical stance, tone quality).

Writing in a variety of modes:

Express suitable subject matter in prose fiction, verse, *and* drama.

Speech in a variety of modes:

1. Tell a story coherently and engagingly.
2. Contribute constructively to improvised drama.
3. Read prose, verse, and drama fluently and engagingly.

Evidence of competence:

The student should be asked to compile a folio of his writing done during the training period. It should be representative of the types of writing attempted and should be prefaced by the student's retrospective analysis of his skill with written composition.

Sound and videotape recordings of the student's oral performances should present a sampling of types of speech situations and subject matter. The student should also make his own written assessment of his strengths and weaknesses in speech.

Observation records made at the time of a particular speech event should be on file for each student. They might include a sampling from instructors, from fellow students, and from the student himself. They would supplement the sound and videotape recordings by supplying critical data and perhaps explanations for certain features of a performance.

A senior thesis would center on a pedagogical problem (see section on pedagogy) and would be a final test of the student's ability to handle a complex topic in satisfactory expository style.

Knowledge of rhetoric and linguistics

Although the Guidelines speak of the student's knowledge of the respective domains of rhetoric and linguistics, the two fields obviously overlap. If linguistics is construed here as scientific language study and rhetoric as the art of making choices among

alternatives in language, then their similarities and differences are at least superficially apparent. The composition teacher who has adequate knowledge of both fields may have a theoretical understanding of English which gives him assurance in the thousands of decisions and responses he makes to his own composition and to his students' composition. In both of the categories below, the study centers on finished samples of writing and speech, a retrospective examination of discourse rather than the process of composing. (Rhetoric and linguistics offer a body of principles about discourse, techniques for analysis, and terminology.)

Rhetorical theory and practice:

1. Explain the nature and types of invention and arrangement and the elements of style (according to the classical models and in contrast with later rhetorical theories).
2. Explain speaker/writer-audience relationships and their effect upon discourse.
3. Explain the nature of proof in discourse.
4. Explain the ethical responsibilities of the speaker or writer.
5. Explain how samples of children's and adolescents' writing and speaking show the presence of rhetorical principles.
6. Use rhetorical theory as a basis for making judgments about the purpose and quality of spoken and written discourse (both expository and non-expository forms).
7. Explain the relationship between rhetoric and scientific language study.

Scientific language study:

1. Explain the fundamental principles of language analysis according to modern linguistic techniques (e.g., phonology, morphology, syntax, dialects, lexicography).
2. Explain the origins and development of modern English.
3. Explain English sentence structure using premises and methods of two descriptive systems.

Evidence of competence:

A comprehensive examination, which may be either written or oral or both, can lead the student to pull together and synthesize his knowledge of a field as no single course examination can. As Wayne Booth has argued, the comprehensive examination is a minimum requirement of a department that

> claims to have a "program" for preparation of students in English.[73] The well-known abuses of comprehensive examinations can be avoided if there is determination to use this kind of examination for its proper purpose of assessing depth and integration of knowledge in a field.

Knowledge of psychology and philosophy of language

The cutting edge of thought about language is coming from the fields of psychology and philosophy. Though much of it is speculative and incomplete, it is not for that reason inconsequential or premature for study by prospective teachers. The psychology of language provides explanations of how humans acquire language and how language is related to thought. Philosophers of language probe the reasons for human use of language and the relationship between language and physical reality. Both of these fields of inquiry are uniquely a part of the twentieth century. In his discussion of the major twentieth century philosophers whose concern is with "ordinary life," Herbert Kohl summarized their work thus:

> We have seen how an emphasis on ordinary life leads to the notion of complexity. Life does not have a single great question with a single answer, but questions and answers. Within our lives communication plays an extraordinarily important part. Without being able to reach our fellow men, and without having some common human experience, we would never be able to cope with our world. Communication is naturally a central concern of contemporary philosophy. What makes it possible? When does it succeed? What are its varied forms? These are all questions to which philosophers in both Europe and America have been addressing themselves. Some have done so in the more technical form of analyzing language, others in the more psychological form of analyzing man's personal world. But at the center of these complementary enterprises lies a common concern with man's daily life and with his communication in a world that is acknowledged by all to be too complex for words.[74]

This paragraph establishes both the relevance of modern philosophy for the composition teacher and the absolutely central

[73]Wayne C. Booth, "The Undergraduate Program," in *The College Teaching of English*, p. 210.

[74]Herbert Kohl, *The Age of Complexity* (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1965), pp. 271-272.

position of the composition teacher in modern education.

Psychology of language learning and use:

1. Explain the normal development of the relationship between thought and speech in young children.
2. Explain the normal development of the capacity for abstract thought.
3. Explain the processes of concept formation which involve words as the means.
4. Explain the relationships among inner speech, oral speech, and written speech.

Philosophy of language:

Explain the modern philosophic theories on what makes communication possible.

Evidence of competence:

A comprehensive examination is also applicable here for the same purposes as in the previous section. The topics stated above are difficult and complex, requiring a considerable period of thought. To be of any real value, the support for these topics should be deeply understood and durably retained.

Pedagogy

It is a commonplace that knowing the subject is no guarantee of knowing how to teach it – or, better, helping others learn the subject. Yet the commonplace does not always take its proper place as bedrock for planning teacher preparation programs. In preparation to teach composition, it must assume that position. Pedagogy unites knowing and doing.

Theory:

1. Explain the origins, evolution, and purposes of composition teaching.
2. Explain the premises which underlie creativity in language and the conditions necessary to its appearance.
3. Explain the composing process in children and adolescents.
4. Explain the most prominent research findings on the teaching of composition.

Practice:

1. Conduct a consultation with a single younger student about samples of his composition in order to demon-

strate ability both to analyze composition critically and to encourage the student.

2. Explain to a small group or class of younger students several of the conventions of writing and speaking (with evidence from their later behavior that they have understood the explanation).
3. Correlate several forms of expression (linguistic and non-linguistic) in one or more sessions with a group of younger students performing.
4. Create a suitable occasion with a group of younger students where careful writing is appropriate and worthwhile from the students' point of view.
5. Collect and analyze evidence of students' development of skill with oral and written language.
6. Engage a group of younger students in situations where they may exercise each of the following disciplined oral techniques: directed discussion, oral interpretation, storytelling, and extemporaneous speech.
7. Lead a group of younger students in improvised drama.

Evidence of competence:

Knowledge of the theoretical aspects of pedagogy may be tested with a comprehensive examination. There is probably value for the prospective teacher in articulating the theoretical base of his planned teaching strategies; however, perhaps the most significant test of his comprehension of pedagogical theory is his application of it.

A senior thesis should concern some problem in the teaching of composition which allows the student to draw upon the knowledge categories in rhetoric and linguistics, psychology and philosophy, and pedagogy. The problem should be one that has arisen in his teaching experience with children or young people. (A problem closely related to literature and reading skill should allow equal opportunity to combine knowledge about language with teaching practices.)

Videotape recordings of the prospective teacher's performance with younger students are extremely important. They should be made at intervals during the teacher's training and should include a sampling of types of situations and teaching purposes.

A folio of work done by younger students under the prospective teacher's direction should be accompanied by that

teacher's analysis. He should demonstrate his insight into the circumstances in which the language emanated and the qualities which the samples display.

Experiences

If the prospective teacher is to use experience as the core of his teaching, insuring that language is always relevant to students' experiences, then he needs a repertoire of certain kinds of experiences to draw from. It is assumed that he is more likely to introduce widely varied experiences in his classroom if his college training has demonstrated their relevance and encouraged him to use them. (Teachers tend to teach as they were taught.)

The following experiences could occur in many different settings during the student's college career. Some of them could be planned as parts of courses; others could be independently arranged.

1. Speak to non-college-related groups where the level of academic preparation and the expectations for the speaker are quite different from the usual college class.
2. Express a response to experience in some non-linguistic medium.
3. Make a motion picture.
4. Compose personal letters on sound tape.
5. Write a journalistic report for a newspaper or magazine.

Evidence of completion:

Observation reports by the student or by other students and instructors may both confirm the student's having had the experience and suggest the texture of the experience. A journal might be one of the best introspective accounts of the intellectual and emotional effects of the experiences. Whatever tangible results of the experiences are preservable and portable should be added to the student's file.

THE STATE OF THE ART

Statements from many sources – from James Conant to the novice teacher in anonymous suburbia – attest to the crudeness of teacher preparation programs. Preparation to teach composition is not apparently in any cruder state than preparation in other fields, but it is quite obviously due for improvement. The exemplary program just sketched seems extremely ambitious – in time necessary to undergo it, in facilities necessary to offer it properly, in energy and perseverance required of college faculty members to plan and supervise it. No part of the program is beyond the capacity of some institutions at present; but to change all teacher preparation institutions so that they can offer all parts of the program will require much effort. Perhaps the graduates of such a program will not infallibly prove to be expert teachers of composition. But they might be! And that is the heart of the matter.